

Le 13 janvier 1941.

Monsieur Cyrias Ouellet,  
Docteur en Sciences,  
Professeur de Chimie Physique à la  
Faculté des Sciences de l'Université Laval  
Boulevard de l'Entente,  
E/V.

Herr Dokter,

Moi non plus je n'ai rien à vous dire.  
Il ne m'est cependant pas interdit (pas à ce  
que je sache) de vous faire remarquer les in-  
quiétudes que je pourrai avoir (il n'est pas  
possible d'en déterminer les conditions) si par  
quelque hâbetude d'esprit vous identifiez la  
(Bowel Morality) du compte rendu que vous avez eu  
la très généreuse et très délicate obligeance de  
me faire parvenir, si vous le confondiez avec la  
nôtre. Il en est en effet, directement la contraire.

Mais, comme j'ai bien compris qu'avec votre  
prudence habituelle, vous n'avez choisi aucune part  
afin de ne pas troubler la paix dont vous jouissez  
entre l'être et le non-être, j'ai la ferme convic-  
tion que les conditions que je pourrais avoir men-  
tionnées plus haut ne sont pas accomplies.

Veuillez agréer, cher Monsieur, l'expression  
de mes sentiments extrêmement distingués et exagé-  
rément respectueux.

Charles De Koninck

per

— "Things are not going too well, even in hell."

To His Lowness

Sir C. P. R. Screw Tape, T. E., B. S.,  
General Headquarters.

Dearest uncle,

They say up here that it takes all sorts to make a world, but I am sure it takes only one screw tape to make a hell. In fact, I believe that "one sort" is in itself a hell.

Judging from your last letter, you are furious at me for letting my "patient" go. If you gave less orders and did a little more thinking, you would soon realise that you are really furious at yourself, because what you call my failure is the failure of the methods you have been teaching me. The trouble with you and all your Headquarters staff is that, like most statesmen up here, you are no longer in contact with the people. We poor devils up here are begin-

ning to know that business is no longer what it used to be. Not that the Enemy is taking our customers away from us. He also complains bitterly, but is not so prone to blame his agents for their lack of efficiency as you are. He would rather give them a hand in handling a situation which is really becoming impossible. He has an ~~un~~limited supply of Hope, whilst we seem to be most sensitive to Fear, which makes us cruel and stupid and, I think, accounts for most of our failures.

Strange enough, these two sentiments seem to be bound together. The Enemy instructs his agents to make a liberal use of both of them, and I must say they do so with remarkable success. We, of course, can use only Fear and even then, it does not ~~only~~ always work in our favour. In the past, the General Hellmasters have adopted the policy of destroying Hope in humans. That, I feel, is the worst blunder ever committed by a supposedly responsible body of devils. Every one knows that if you want to

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tame an animal and keep him under your control, you must balance Fear with Hope; Fear alone will only breed anger and may mean the end of the Tamer. You must keep your animal (or soul) in a constant state of internal conflict; if you don't, he will soon regain control of himself, and might eventually out-devil you.

It is my duty, as a faithful devil, to warn you that the inconsistent orders that reach us from the G.H.Q. (of which your 31 letters are a mighty example) have put us, tempters, in such a frightful state of mind that it is we, and not our patients, who have become the battleground of incessant Hope and Fear. Our hesitations are fatal to us; without knowing it, we are being tamed by simple, single-purposed human souls. Of course, the Enemy is also losing ground, because we have weakened the reactions of Hope and Fear. But what good is that to us? I am beginning to feel that our real enemy is man himself. There are signs that we are

being found out. That flop Kieflin  
has been guilty of quite a lot of loose-  
talking in his undignified mania  
of amusing human audiences.  
Showing them how clever we are has  
only resulted in this most disquieting  
"eureka" by one of them:

"Zwei der größten Menschenfeinde,  
Furcht und Hoffnung, angekettet,  
halt'ich ab von der Gemeinde;  
Platz gemacht! ihr seyd gerettet."

Now, of all the things we have  
to reckon with in our strategy, the  
most important<sup>one</sup> is the fact that the  
human soul is the only place where  
we can meet the Enemy. I warn  
you that that battleground is getting  
very slippery. The Enemy himself  
is complaining about it. In fact,  
I believe representatives from both  
sides have met secretly to find out  
the best means of revamping the war,  
since the humans do not seem to  
cooperate very much. They say they  
have enough of their own quarrels.  
If things go on like that, I am afraid we  
shall have to call off the fight and admit  
that "Mate's Labor's Lost."

Reading your letters again, I can see that you have sown the seeds of your own defeat. You have asked us to blur the simple, clear-cut ideas of "True or False", "Good or Evil", "Love or Hate", that the Enemy had been trying to drive into the human head. They have listened only too well to our suggestions, so well, indeed, that it has become impossible for them to see a real contradiction anywhere. Instead of the good old childish word "or", which made their speech so funny to listen to, they now use involved expressions like: in a certain degree, as if, to all practical purposes, etc... I ask you, my dear Screwtape, how can you arouse passion in people like that? They won't do a thing even against us. They don't want to know if we are right or wrong, but only if we have something new to offer; if not, they are not interested and we might as well not exist at all, as far as they care. The most hopeless side of it is that anything we can do to relieve the situation would benefit the Enemy as much as ourselves, so

It was  
a  
mistake

that we would not be any better off.

The results of most of your machiavellian methods have been detrimental to the Cause. Take, for instance, your bright idea of seemingly encouraging religious feelings and acts in order to pervert them. That was just as silly as seeking peace through war. The patients grew infatuated with Christian ideas, they acquired habits of all sorts, including a most pernicious inclination to "believe", and so became an easy prey whenever they fell into the Enemy's hand. It shouldn't have escaped your notice that the Enemy never encourages that sort of tactics, and that may very well be the secret of his strength. It is true that some of His agents think that small lies are helpful in teaching big truths, that clever tricks will help to establish justice or that a little cruelty is not too high a price to pay so that Charity may reign in the world. Such short-sighted measures are not at all uncommon on the Enemy's side; they are often used by some of his unintelligent tempters when dealing with "soft" patients. But I have been told that He, personally, does not like them. Even

as He stood in grave danger, he told His body-guard to put his sword back where it belonged, "because", he added, "he who plays with that gadget might hurt himself in the end." He knew well that being true to one's principles is the most clever trick in the long run. I wish some of our leaders had more of that common sense. I mean you.

Coming to the way you have treated me for my failure, I must admit that it is only in accordance with our rules. You have been too long in Hell to know any better. I hear that you even had the cheek to publish the letters you sent me, without ever mentioning any of my answers. At least, I can see that you have learnt something from the journalists we have sent you down there.

Roast in peace, disgusting uncle, and be sure I hate you forever.

Mine very truly,

Wormwood

Old Radiation Laboratory  
University of California  
Berkeley 4.

25 février 1950.

Hochgeehrter Herr Professor!

J'ai lu et relu, avec un enthousiasme croissant, votre lettre pleine de sagesse. Vous vous trouvez à l'avant-garde des préoccupations actuelles de la science et convergez vers les mêmes conclusions que Wiener, dont le système nerveux règne sur 200 livres et une barbe. Ses idées cybernétiques l'amènent de plus en plus à étudier les rapports entre les sens, en particulier la vue et le toucher. Dans "Science", l'automne dernier, ~~il~~ a publié un article remarquable sur les principes qui doivent présider à la conception d'appareils destinés à remplacer un sens par un autre chez les mutilés de guerre. Comme par hasard, il se trouve que ces considérations touchent aux notions d'expérience, de causalité et de finalité. En janvier, la même revue "Science" a publié deux articles sur ces problèmes fondamentaux, l'un par Niels Bohr et l'autre par von Bartollanfsky de l'Université d'Ottawa. J'ai demandé à ce dernier un tiré à part et lui ai en même temps donné votre adresse.

Votre idée que la vie finira comme elle a commencé, par la radiation, entre aussi dans les préoccupations de Radiation Laboratory; on y "fait la bombe" et, par les mêmes moyens (les isotopes) on étudie la Photosynthèse, source de l'énergie de tous les êtres vivants. Inutile de dire que je travaille exclusivement sur ce dernier problème.

(1) [Cybernétiquement parlant, la supériorité du toucher sur la vue provient de ce que dans le toucher il y a véritablement "expérience", c.-à-dire interaction de l'observateur avec l'objet, et non pas simple représentation. Dès qu'il y a contact actif et réciproque, il n'y a plus, à proprement parler, de "monde extérieur". On pourrait dire qu'à partir de la découverte du principe d'indétermination et du principe opérationnel, la physique théorique a cessé d'être cartésienne. Il faut voir comment la notion de causalité à sens unique s'en est trouvée ébranlée. Par le toucher, l'opérateur et son objet, chacun dans la mesure de ses possibilités, apprennent à se "conduire" mutuellement. Contrairement aux gestes dirigés par la vue, qui dépassent souvent leur mesure et ont toujours l'air bêtement mécaniques, ceux qui dirigent le toucher s'ajustent de façon continue, par un cycle ininterrompu de réflexes correcteurs, aux possibilités de chaque instant et enfoncent doucement dans la direction où ça cède, comme le monarque de Saint-Eupéry qui était toujours obéi parce qu'il sentait toujours la mesure

exacte de son pouvoir. Je crois que si la science du gouvernement réside dans la vision et en particulier la prévision, l'art de gouverner repose sur le toucher. (Le type qui sait le moins gouverner, c'est "l'organisateur". Nous verrons plus loin pourquoi.) Admirez la profondeur du parler populaire: "C'est un visionnaire (même sens dans "fanatique"), il n'a pas de tact." Ceci m'amène directement à vos sombres réflexions sur la peinture. Il serait intéressant de chercher si l'essor de la peinture, art purement visuel, a coïncidé avec un déclin de la sculpture, art tactile par excellence. ~~(du point de vue du sculpteur)~~, et si cette transition n'a pas coïncidé avec une recrudescence des "ismes" dans les idées et la politique. Les "ismes" sont des pures représentations, produits par la vue amputée des autres sens.

On peut aussi démontrer, par la cybernétique, pourquoi Hollywood fait des mauvais films. Même sans la théorie mathématique du feed-back, on voit facilement qu'une correction continue de l'opération, induite par les réactions de l'objet, est le seul moyen d'atteindre un but avec précision, sûreté, minimum de déplacement et de dépenses de temps et d'énergie. (~~Principe des fonctions linéaires, par opposition à l'artillerie, art cartésien contemporain de Descartes.~~) Ces conditions sont les conditions mêmes de ce qu'on appelle l'élégance, c.-à-d. du maximum d'effet avec le minimum de moyens. Un geste élégant, une démonstration élégante, une toilette élégante sont tous caractérisés par cette économie et cette simplicité, apparente seulement, mais résultant en réalité de l'harmonie d'un grand nombre de facteurs. (Voir l'analyse des réflexes du patineur). Malheureusement Hollywood, étant trop riche, n'a aucun sens de l'économie des moyens ce qui le rend incapable d'élégance, et, n'ayant pas appris, pour la même raison, à lutter avec les choses, est aussi incapable de tout ce qui peut "toucher". (Les personnages du cinéma américain ne sont jamais de la maison; ils ont toujours un air irréel, c.-à-d. non touché et non senti, comme les voisins que l'on ne voit jamais qu'à travers les vitres des fenêtres.) Les freudiens américains pensent que la pauvreté pousse les peuples à produire des œuvres d'art pour sublimer leurs aspirations refoulées, mais alors pourquoi des œuvres plutôt que n'importe quoi? Il me semble que la nécessité d'économiser les moyens, c.-à-d. d'agir avec intelligence et tact, est plutôt ce qui conduit naturellement à des habitudes esthétiques. Quand un pauvre rate son coup, ce qui en résulte est un échec mais non pas un monstre.

Naturellement, la vue — ses yeux — côtés. En percevant plusieurs objets à la fois elle incite à établir des relations, des "patterns" plus ou moins utiles pour se débrouiller. D'ailleurs, le nerf optique contient beaucoup moins de fibres qu'il n'y a de terminaisons sensibles sur la rétine, ce qui oblige le système à faire une sélection, à classer les formes visuelles en catégories, indépendantes de la grandeur et de l'orientation des objets. Le toucher produit une partie de ses effets sous forme de réflexes circulaires qui, une fois établis par l'habitude, fonctionnent sans que le cerveau prenne conscience de la sensa-

tion et servent à diriger, souvent avec une souplesse et précision admirables, des mouvements coutumiers. De même, on s'habitue vite aux goûts et aux odeurs. Il est remarquable qu'on ne soit jamais parvenu à classer les sensations autres que les visuelles qu'en catégories très vagues et qu'on ne les ait pas liées par un réseau de relations logiques.

Mais ~~comme nous le ditons habituellement~~ la vue a voulu se substituer aux autres sens. Il y a eu d'abord la passion des paysages, qui me paraît être un phénomène datant d'un siècle ou deux ~~au plus~~... Puis les maisons; grâce aux progrès de la fabrication du verre, sont devenues de plus en plus vitrées en même temps que les fauteuils devenaient plus moelleux et que la ventilation et les désinfectants éliminaient les odeurs. Or, je soutiens que la sensation visuelle, si ses perceptions ne sont pas vérifiées par le toucher ou le goût ou l'odorat, est un agent de frustration à rendre un homme fou. Sans parler des exemples qui sautent à l'esprit ~~(comme nous le ditons habituellement)~~ y a-t-il rien qui donne une impression de séparation plus pénible que de traverser en train un village ou l'on a vécu? Tout homme normal se précipite vers la portière et hume l'air de l'endroit, sans quoi il n'y aura jamais de paix en lui. Enfin les Américains, dans leur race de couper les derniers liens qui les rattachaient à ce monde, ont implanté ce monstrueux emblème de notre temps: le cellophane. Et ils sont surpris d'avoir les nerfs en boule.

Je dis que l'on est en train de réduire l'homme à l'état d'une espèce d'insecte ou oiseau. Ces animaux ont des yeux d'une grande perfection ~~(les oiseaux ont des yeux excellents)~~, mais leurs autres sens semblent pratiquement inexistantes. Il paraît qu'ils se guident presque exclusivement sur leurs sensations visuelles (H. M. Fox: "The personality of Animals" — Pelican Books) Aussi voyez comme ils sont gauches dans leurs contacts avec les objets; leurs mouvements sont marqués d'écarts ridicules et d'obstinations absurdes. Ils perçoivent, mais ils n'apprennent pas, ne s'adaptent pas. N'ayant ni tact, ni flair ils sont ingouvernables et ne peuvent exister qu'à l'état ~~d'individus~~ de sociétés rigidement totalitaires comme la ruche et la fourmilière. Par ailleurs, ils sont puissamment muselés, aciles, vifs et très peu sensibles. Ils sont fanatiques. On me dit que Wiener a construit une machine sans mémoire, gouvernée par des cellules photo-électriques et dont le comportement ressemble à s'y méprendre à celui d'un insecte. A l'obscurité, elle reste immobile; aux faibles éclairagements elle s'épuise dans une perplexité fébrile parce qu'elle ne se souvient jamais de ses mouvements précédents, encore moins de leurs effets; enfin, si on la "fascine" par un éclair, elle fonce comme une fanatique suivant une direction qui devient inflexible.

A propos du goût et de l'odorat, je crois que ce sont simplement deux localisations du même sens osmotique et chimique. Quand ils sont obscurcis par un rhume de cerveau, avez-vous l'impression d'être séparé de votre passé? Proust a écrit de très belles

choses sur le pouvoir évocateur du goût et tout le monde connaît celui de l'odorat. Puisque ces sens possèdent le pouvoir de nous faire "revivre" un moment passé, c'est qu'ils sont probablement les portes ou du moins les dépositaires de l'expérience. Ils ont le don non seulement de rappeler les autres sensations enfouies dans la mémoire mais de les replacer dans leur contexte initial avec leur signification et de faire "repressentir" ce qui allait se passer ensuite. Leur pouvoir d'intégration s'étend dans le temps jusqu'à ce qui était alors l'avenir et reconstitue toute une trame d'expérience encore utilisable pour un certain genre de prédiction. Connaître l'avenir par l'utilisation plus ou moins consciente de la mémoire ne s'appelle pas "prévoir", mais "pressentir" et avoir du "flair", deux expressions bien olfactives. Il est à noter que ces sensations ne sont pas soutenues comme celles de la vue et du toucher, mais viennent par vagues; elles ne donnent pas prise non plus à une description discursive et ne se laissent pas séparer en parties sauf en ce qui concerne l'ordre de leur succession. Il semble que la mémoire ait enregistré non leur valeur absolue mais leur dérivée par rapport au temps. Si ceci est vrai, cela voudrait dire, cybernétiquement, qu'elles jouent un rôle capital dans la conduite de la vie et dans l'art de gouverner.

Considérons un mécanisme autorégulateur. Il faut lui donner une ligne générale de conduite, un moteur, des organes qui le tiennent constamment en contact avec les effets qu'il produit, des organes de transmission qui appliquent aux mouvements du moteur une correction proportionnelle à l'écart entre l'effet produit et l'effet cherché. Mais cela ne suffit pas, parce qu'il s'écoule toujours un certain temps entre la perception d'un écart et sa correction. Cette machine rudimentaire passe son temps à zigzaguer comme un apprenti. Si  $x$  est l'écart perçu à l'instant  $t$ , le circuit d'information doit fournir aussi la valeur de  $dx/dt$  et la forme de la fonction, puis le tout doit être intégré pour que la correction appliquée au tout de l'intervalle  $\tau$  que prennent ces opérations corrige la valeur qu'aura  $x$  à l'instant  $t + \tau$ . Donc, gouverner c'est prévoir. Si la forme de la fonction n'est pas prédéterminée, la machine devra l'apprendre par tâtonnements successifs puis graver dans sa mémoire les fonctions qui ont le mieux réussi. Chaque fois qu'un nouvel écart se dessine, l'allure de sa variation en fonction du temps est confrontée avec celles de l'expérience, celle qui lui ressemble le plus est choisie et la correction correspondante est appliquée. Je suis tenté d'assimiler le flair à cette perception plus ou moins empirique mais rapide et sûre de la dérivée du danger et d'en faire une faculté olfactive. De tout ceci je conclus que le gouvernement visionnaire par "planning" est le plus mauvais car il ne s'inquiète même pas de constater les effets immédiats de ses actes et de les corriger à mesure par une espèce de sens du toucher qui est sensible à la "natural cussedness of things". Le moins qu'on puisse demander c'est du tact. Mais si le tact suffit à empêcher les petites catastrophes, il ne mène pas à grand chose. Si l'on veut avancer, il faut aussi être sensible à la dérivée des événements, qu'on peut ainsi empêcher, contrôler ou utiliser avant même qu'ils ne se produisent.

Le flair des politiciens d'expérience me semble être une belle illustration de ce second degré de la cybernétique. Ce sont probablement des hommes sensuels qui ont une riche vie viscérale, ~~pour des raisons que j'exposerai plus loin~~. Cependant, toute cette sagesse (a) est pour le moins stérile si elle n'est pas inspirée par un idéal quelconque, probablement d'origine visuelle et (b) devient impuissante si la machine subit un écart provoqué par une cause extérieure et incontrôlable que seul un sens à longue portée comme la vue aurait pu lui permettre de percevoir et d'éviter. On sait que le tact et le flair ne sont d'aucun secours dans les circonstances extrêmes; il faut ouvrir les yeux et raisonner. La mémoire, elle, ne fait qu'embrouiller la vue et propose des solutions timides et incongrues, parce qu'elle représente la continuité de la fonction, qui passe justement par une discontinuité. C'est pourquoi toute révolution s'efforce d'effacer l'histoire. Mais dès qu'elle veut se consolider, elle est forcée de faire appel aux sens non visuels, qui assurent la continuité de l'expérience au prix d'un certain automatisme passablement animal.

~~Quant à établir entre les sens une hiérarchie de spiritualité ou de matérialité, je vous laisse à débattre cette question qui me paraît cybernétiquement oiseuse.~~ Au sujet du rôle du toucher et du goût, ~~vous trouvez~~ des choses intéressantes dans le livre de Sheldon; "Varieties of Human Temperament". Son type visuel et musclé est l'organisateur actif, le militaire ou le "capitaine" d'industrie, qui excelle à classer les choses et les gens, mais reste impuissant à prendre contact avec la vie. Il ne goûte rien, ne sent rien et ne touche les objets que pour les déplacer. Le viscéral, lui, conquiert le monde par l'intérieur en multipliant les points de contact, palpant, humant et savourant comme s'il voulait tout transformer en sa propre substance. Il rumine l'univers, ~~et utilise son talent~~ <sup>Il a des</sup> pensées profondes qui le rendent heureux et changent parfois le cours de l'histoire. ~~Il est généralement gras et jovial.~~ (Ce type est celui qui a le plus de "raciness"). ~~Solitude~~ Il y a aussi le cérébral, qui est sensible aux piqûres d'insectes et à la valeur des mots, ne reçoit des choses que des impressions passives mais très vives qui lui passent dans le système à l'état de symbole. Il reste sceptique quant au monde de l'action et des sens et cherche sa paix dans une harmonie interne; c'est un ~~donx~~ ascète, capable de fournir des valeurs esthétiques ou morales. Sheldon se plaint de ce que les images de Christ et les portraits de présidents d'universités deviennent de plus en plus musclés et les mâchoires de plus en plus carrées et redoute que ce ne soit un symptôme du règne des organisateurs qui, avec l'aide de la science, vont conduire l'humanité à une mort violente après avoir anesthésié ses sens de gouvernement et de conservation: le toucher et le goût. Justement, il espère que de nouveaux Rabelais et Falstaff vont venir à temps pour nous redonner nos intestins avant que nous ne perdions complètement et le ventre et la tête.

That's all.

Cyrias

Saint

Quebec, January 7, 1950.

My dear Sir:

Heaven knows why, but I dreamt of you on Xmas night and was firmly resolved to write you. (I have a growing suspicion of being a procrastinator!) This morning I received your — what shall I call it? — and the book too, which I shall go through carefully in due time. I have glanced at the passages you had marked, and strongly recommend one of C. S. Lewis' latest books: "That hideous strength". The "Teleological Mechanisms" comes to me just in time, for I'm to write the preface to a book in which there is question of finality.

Things like this happen to me all the time; just as my existence becomes smooth and comfortable, someone forces a book on me that is useful and so disturbs my contemplation of the void. At the present time I am day-dreaming about the external senses. At last I have discovered the symptom (perhaps I should say, more modestly, an important one) of a general decline of the human race! Something has gone wrong with the organs of our lower senses — our touch, our taste, and to some extent, our smell. They have become obtuse, and as a result we are wasting away into the kind of spiritualism that is the lowest form of materialism. The light dawned on me this Summer at the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam, where I saw for the first time a Ruysdaël in the flesh, so to speak. Some works of Rembrandt, too, struck me in the same way. I had always felt a bit embarrassed about my reaction to these great painters. Here, dear Cyrias, is the revelation: these men are all sight and practically no touch.

It's a long story. The prolegomena are, although it is the lowest of our senses, the poorest as to representation, nevertheless, touch is the most fundamental of our external senses and more particularly it is the sense of certitude. That is why we call it the sense of intellect. Sight, on the contrary, while it is by far the most perfect of them all in the order of representation — it reveals the greatest number and variety of objects — it has much less certitude, it is much less inevitably mixed up with the things it perceives: when we desire to be certain about the thing seen we naturally reach out towards it with our hand. In other words, the great modern painting has for several centuries been idealistic. In idealism, we overrate the better part of ourselves and tend to disparage the humbler one which is in a way by far more important. We are, after all, but a tiny dull shadow of intellect implemented by a huge and just as indispensable instinct. Civilization is approaching the death of radiation. Life began, entered upon the scene, through radiation and will probably leave by the same door. Further proof of this is to be found in the perverse sensibility of our rear ends: we can no longer bear to feel the resistance of matter, of the substantial wood, and we surround ourselves

with soft yielding materials, thus encouraging our pseudo-spirituality. (No causal order suggested.) How can we stop this? Are you going to take the hard bench when you have a comfortable club chair to float in? (Note the difference between to sit "in" something and to sit "on" something).

Next comes the sense of taste. Not only are we getting on without wine, but we have even renounced eating bread. We no longer have bread and really no longer want it. The Flemings were right when they saw deep perversion in the one who eats Sunday "koeskebrood" every day of the week. The spirit-invigorating wine we replace with knock-out-guaranteed-on-first-contact spirits.

O Rabelais! He was a last flare, perhaps exaggerated a bit, in despair. And then comes Descartes with his "irréalité" of the proper sensibles, shutting out the "world of disorder and uncleanness". (Frank on Einstein) And in England Locke murdered Falstaff (with odourless gas). And Rubens is all food for eyes, none for touch, nor for taste and there is not a smell in his lavish tableaux. In my opinion, there is not a single nude in all modern painting. The thought of all this is terrifying.

Hopelessly depressing, when we reflect that the sense of taste is the sense of wisdom: the sense of distinction and order, so marvelously displayed by the discriminating action of salt — *sal sapientiae*. "*Sapientis est ordinare et judicare, non ordinari nec judicari.*" The mouth is the outmost sphere of the universe, it envelops the whole and encloses and discerns the unseen. It separates and distills and explores the stuff that is to make up our very substance. The trouble with all the modern philosophers I know is that they do not really enjoy their food, eating as they do mere molecules, vitamins, fibers and tissues. As you can see in our food displays, the first and last appeal is to the eyes — little happens in between, thanks to cocktail anesthesia.

The problem of touch and taste is to me settled "*d'une manière claire et définitive*". Smell still has me puzzled. It is in one way more profoundly spiritual than any of the other senses. It is an invisible presence. Extremely abstract, we do not associate it with the tangible. Yet it can be sharp and incontestable. The chemist's nose is witness to its subtlety. All this is thoroughly supported by Flemish legend. It seems that when the devil appears in human form, and is finally recognized for what he is, he vanishes with a howl, leaving behind a stench so awful that the witnesses have renounced even trying to describe it. Inescapable stench, even more so than pain, gives us a sensible experience of despair — "it stinks like Hell!"

So does this letter.

(signé) Charles De Koninck

Prof. Dr. and generally Learned Cyrias Ouellet,  
Laboratory for old radiation,  
University of California,  
Berkeley, CAL.

College of St. Thomas

St. Paul, Minnesota

August 22, 1945

Dear Charles,

I am sorry to have been forced to delay so long answering your letter of three weeks ago. My stay at Benincasa was abruptly interrupted by a call home when my aunt became critically ill; she recovered from the illness and I returned almost directly to St. Paul.

The translation of the Cassirer reached me safely. I have read only some fifty pages of the text, for again the work was interrupted by the trip East and the return to work at St. Thomas. The next few weeks preparatory to my leaving here will not afford much time either. But at the earliest opportunity in St. Louis I will get down to consistent work at it. I am anxious to settle down where I can apply myself to it. Cusanus' philosophy is certainly of amazing significance and throws great light on the whole thought of Feuerbach.

I got hold of the Eschmann article on your Common Good. It seems to me to be a pretty terrible piece no matter how you look at it. Anyone who has read your book will, I think, realize that Eschmann has failed to understand the whole problem and has certainly misrepresented you. In the first place he does not accept your statement that men are "les parties principales constituant materiellement l'univers"; but in the second place he shows that he doesn't understand it, for he attributes to that proposition consequences which do not belong to it, which you do not attribute to it, and which are absurd. For example, on page 189 he says: "for, being material parts of the cosmos and subordinated, as material parts, to the stars and the spheres, they (men) will have just as much responsibility...as the pistons in a steam engine". What is incredible is not so much that he doesn't accept the statement that men are "les parties principales constituant materiellement l'univers", as his refusal to see that it is as principal parts (and what that involves) that intellectual creatures are subordinated to the common good of the universe. That it is materially that intellectual creatures constitute the principal parts is easily enough shown by recalling for him the fourth lesson of the Commentary on Book Two of the Physics: "Et quod sint (animae rationales) in materia, per hoc probat" etc.

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What follows on pp.190-192 seems absolutely irrelevant. He has nothing to say upon that which I insist, namely, that the root reason why the common good is said to be common is its superabundance and incommensurability with the singular good of the person. He fails throughout to see this. Compare p.197: "Is not this act and good of the speculative intellect a personal good?" From beginning to end Eschmann shows a complete misunderstanding of your position. It is summed up in his statement that you "have constantly by-passed this most essential thesis of Thomistic ethics", namely, that the good of the speculative intellect is a personal good. But you give the whole answer on that point on pp.61-62 and p.65, "Rappelons". Eschmann adverts to your responses here, but what he does with them (and with Peter of Auvergne) is appalling. It is perhaps true that Peter of Auvergne's phrase "speculatio totius civitatis" is a bit curious, but the meaning is certainly clear enough as soon as "totius civitatis" is taken in opposition to "secundum seipsum solum". Eschmann's impression is evidently that you are basing the primacy of the common good on an "assecutio communis" of the end of the speculative intellect. It might be well, though, to clear up the ambiguity in the use of the term common good as applied to the practical intellect and as applied to the speculative intellect - I mean that the good of the practical intellect can be common to many while the good of the speculative intellect is singularly his who contemplates, although the good to which the speculative intellect is joined is more common than the good to which the practical intellect is joined. Eschmann puts that in a footnote on p.200; if he understood it rightly he would be led to concede the whole essence of your argument. Eschmann's whole point against you is erroneously taken; it seems to be that he represents you as basing the primacy of the common good on the assecutio communis of the end of the speculative life; and since St. Thomas insists on the absolute pre-eminence of the singularis assecutio of the speculative good it follows that this personal good has primacy over any common good. But it is clear how this is a misunderstanding of the whole business.

St. Thomas' use of "quoddam bonum commune" and "quasi civis" in speaking of the divine good does not in the least militate against your position (as Eschmann clearly seems to think it does). It seems to me that these modifying words simply indicate that beatitude of the individual person, although dependent upon its communicability to man and its incommensurability with the singular good of any one person, is not precisely the same as the common good of a temporal society - not precisely the same because it has more of the ratio of common good. The quoddam and quasi emphasize the fact that the common good of beatitude is a common good, as you say, sous

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la rapport tres formel. On this point Eschmann might be excused for misunderstanding. For the use of quoddam and quasi might ofcourse suggest that the terms "common good" and "citizen" do not really apply to the divine good and the Heavenly City; and thus Eschmann concludes that "to confuse examples with formal teaching is quite inadmissible" (p.195). But the contrary happens to be the case here; it is precisely the extreme formality of the notion of common good when applied to beatitude that causes St.Thomas to hesitate to use the terms common good and citizen in their temporal (or material?) signification. It is not that St.Thomas is using an example (as distinguished from formal teaching); it is rather that the common good of beatitude is (if I may put it so) exemplary. And anyway, Eschmann ought to have a very hard time on the basis of his position explaining why or how St.Thomas uses quoddam bonum commune and quasi civis at all!

Something might be made of the curious thing that Eschmann does on p.185. After denying what, he says, Maritain's critics allege to be true of the personalist position, namely, that the subordination of man to any general good but the good of God means a denial of man's very personality, Eschmann quotes St.Thomas with the intention, apparently, of showing that this false position could be defended in any case! He says: "Every Thomist is surely authorized to go, in this matter, just as far as St.Thomas himself has gone"; and then he quotes that passage in which St.Thomas is showing that it is possible that something act for an end without having knowledge of the end. The implication is supposed to be that man, when he acts upon the command of another (as a citizen or subject acts under the command of the lawgiver) ~~he~~ acts like an irrational animal; and thus the subordination of man to any general good but the divine good means -or may mean- the denial of man's very personality. -Talk about "non loquatur in angulis"!

Incidentally, on p. 187 there occurs a misrepresentation by which Eschmann is able to represent you as finding your own position distasteful and open to suspicion. He says that you seem to feel that your statement concerning the subordination of the person to the common good of the whole universe is a "revolting" (quoting yourself) statement. The fault here may simply be one of translation, but at any rate the implication is completely false. What you say in your text is: "Bien sur qu'on revoltera contre cette conception si l'on considere la personne singuliere et son bien singulier comme racine premiere...de tout bien intrinseque a l'univers" (p.30). Actually all you say is that those who

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*Communist white  
front. Sec. 5 based upon  
unsubstantiated*

October 9, 1946

Dear Charles,

I should have written before this, but as you can imagine the opening days of school were pretty crowded. It was wonderful to have had the Quebec visit and the trip to Les Escoumains before returning here for the year, and I am grateful to you and Zoe (I shall write to her too) for your kindness in having me with you so much.

The editor of the Modern Schoolman has asked me whether I could prepare an article during the year for his journal. I had thought that possibly I could work out something from the course which I am giving on the Theory of Democracy, but I do not feel entirely competent to handle a subject of that sort alone, and I have been wondering whether you would be willing to help me with such an article; or possibly you would even consider doing such an article with me. I would not have the temerity to propose that we do an article together except that you once suggested our doing together an article on Maritain's political theory. (I had thought too, of giving the Modern Schoolman some results of the study which I will make this year of Feuerbach, but I wondered whether that would be permissible in view of the fact that it will be a doctoral thesis). The ideas which have occurred to me for a paper on the theory of Democracy -a very hastily conceived outline, since the question was brought up only a few days ago- include the following:

I. Begin with a consideration of certain fundamental doctrines in Aristotle's political science -doctrines which are true for all forms of good government but which many writers today think of as being peculiarly democratic, namely:

a) that rule must be for the common good, so that, as you have often pointed out, a king would be a tyrant if he persisted in doing even a laudable thing contrary to the wishes of the community. (I'm not entirely clear on this point however -suppose the people are actually perverse, does the authority of the good ruler cease?) At any rate the doctrine of the primacy of the common good is in some sense equivalent to the doctrine of the consent of the governed.

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- b) the unity of society is a unity of order only and not of simple composition or continuity (Ethics I, and St. Thomas' commentary). Thus the parts of the whole have a certain activity or function proper to themselves.
- c) the fact that speculative science is not subordinated to politics in precisely the same way that the practical sciences are; thus Aristotle guarantees the independence of truth from political interference. The subjection of speculative science to political rule is characteristic of the totalitarian regimes - notably, of course, the Nazi regime with its Nazi biology and Nazi history.

For Aristotle says that democracy is justified if the multitude are of equal virtue.

II. With these basic points established (and the interesting thing is that so many writers today regard the above as proper to democracy) I thought of going on to Aristotle's classification of forms of government. And here I would point out that while the principle which is proper to democracy is equality, the principle by which it really can be justified is the same as that by which it is shown to be absolutely not the best form of government, viz., the principle of virtue. Therefore it follows that, as Aristotle also says, the principle of preservation of such regimes as oligarchy and democracy cannot be that which is most oligarchical or most democratic. Here I am not sure just how democracies should proceed in order to preserve themselves (Aristotle's treatment of this is quite brief I think) but I have an idea that since equality is the principle of civil rule under the democratic form the evil of this is best offset in democracies by fostering the so-called "natural associations" such as the family and voluntary associations where the tendency of virtue to make itself felt in governance is not so deliberately repressed. (As Aristotle says - I may not recall this exactly - the first rulers of villages were kings because the villages were collections of families, and the eldest ruled).

III. Thus Democracy can be preserved only by understanding that it is not, simply and absolutely, the best form of government. Aristotle is correct in pointing out that democracy is destroyed by carrying its proper principle to its logical conclusion because the ultimate way to affirm the freedom and equality of men is to find the end for man not in man's nature (not in man's nature because men do not, for the most part, succeed in achieving the fullness of the life of virtue which their nature appoints for them), but in the dicta of society itself. Thus it is not surprising that what is

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at the root and what is common to the works of the progenitors of democracy (Adam Smith, Hume, Locke etc.) is also at the root and is common to the works of the progenitors of totalitarianism (Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Feuerbach and Marx) -namely, the emancipation of man.

I went to the library last week to get the English translation of Feuerbach and discovered that the first twelve pages were missing from the library copy. But I will locate another copy in Chicago. By the way, Charles, I left my German copy of Feuerbach at your house along with the Satre book and John of St. Thomas which belonged to you. I hate to put you to the trouble of sending it to me, but if Zoe wraps it perhaps my request won't be too hard on you. And as soon as I have something ready on Feuerbach I will send it on to you.

My love to all of you and kindest regards to the Steverlyncks and De Monelons.

As ever yours,

*Charles G. McCoy*

P.S. May I trouble you a bit further with two questions which have long puzzled me: (1) If a citizen is one who rules and is ruled in turn, who are citizens under Aristotle's monarchy

(2) St. Thomas in the commentary on Ethics I says that politics as architectonic science prescribes what the other practical sciences shall do even to the very determining of their work (ad determination actus). Would this not seem to interfere with the speculative element in practical science?

*find -  
(St. Thomas -  
richards  
pope)*

FACULTÉ DE PHILOSOPHIE

Oct.17 46

Minet du Doyen

Dear Charley:

I would be very glad to do an article with you, but, since it would be for the Modern Schoolman, I could hardly sign my name to it. They have been most unsporting in the controversy on the common good. First in accepting Eschmann's diatribe; in publishing his doctrine which is almost if not quite heretical; in offering me too little space for a reply and giving me no assurances that they would actually publish it; in sending me not a word of apology when, from my reply, they might gathered such a thing was imperative. But nothing should prevent me from helping you.

Now as to the points you raise:

(a) If the people are manifestly perverse, the monarch may, if the good result is reasonably certain, employ the methods of the tyrant, that is, force, if he has it. This does not make him a tyrant. If the people are perverse, they cannot be citizens and it might be to their own good to be treated as mere servants. But if such a thing is not practical, he must step out of the picture, not because he has lost his authority as if the latter came from the will of the people alone, but because the people refuse this authority. When the people are perverse they do not even seek a common good per accidens. If the people desire a communistic regime, the monarch, or the government, may use force to repel them because communism, even of the socratic type, is perverse. (See II Polit., lect. 4, p. 69, col. b) Hence, what I said holds only as long as there remains at least a "bonum commune per accidens" sought by the people. If they lose their political nature, which is quite possible (for, to say that man is by nature a political animal does not mean that they necessarily have the proximate disposition to be citizens; man is by nature many things that he does not actually acquire or become), then they cannot be treated politically. Again, it is not the will of the people that makes the good it pursues a real good, not even a common good per accidens; it may be only a bonum apparens.

I realize that the incontestable fact "plures boninum sequuntur passiones", raises considerable difficulties concerning the very possibility of a good government, especially when the will of the majority, ut sic, becomes the rule. We'll discuss this some other time. I have some ideas on it.

(b) On the "unity of society", Mgr. Parent read a paper the other day which will appear in the next issue of our review. Roughly, there are, as is clear in S. Thomas, and ~~xx~~ as was again pointed out in the Encycl. Mystici corporis, three kinds of "whole": the natural whole (which, I believe, with proper proviso, might be extended to the family insofar as the child is "aliquid patris"), the moral, and the mystical. Because the personalists in fact, though not assertedly consider the political community as a natural whole (they consider the moral person of the community as a natural or physical person—I pointed this out in my B.C.: personalism and totalitarianism) of which a person obviously cannot be a part, they have invented the distinction between person and individual, robbing a person of his ~~individuality~~ responsibility and making him at the same time a victim insofar as the state has a responsibility wholly apart from the former, for which it should, per se, be punished in this life, not being immortal. A person can be part only of a moral or mystical whole.

(c) While the state is not architectonic with respect to the speculative sciences, it may be so with respect to their exercise. It may appoint a man to study geometry and appoint another to study metaphysics. However, this theoretical power has lost its meaning and feasibility today because, ut in pluribus, the people we can now be governed by are, often without malice, corrupted as to the very commonia of speculative science. I mean as to the very common principles to be accepted by any man even without being at all a philosopher. This has been lost in the course of the history of thought, which makes Aristotle's theory unpractical. Yet, we must observe that the marxists actually hold this right, but for the wrong thing, of course.

II. I believe, with the marxists, that absolute democracy can never be but a provisional regime, necessarily tending toward selfdestruction. It must allow a degree of freedom incompatible with even the lowest form of stability and security. It must allow even the right to contradict "absolute democracy". In the social field, it is perhaps the most striking and plausible illustration of contradiction. It contains its own contrary and is thus divided against itself in principle. The important consideration being that "plures hominum sequuntur passiones"; not that the plures will actually use this right to contradiction, but in that they will, through negligence and indifference for the common good, allow those who do contradict, to seize power. Ex.g.: several European countries today.

I equally believe that a mitigated democracy, i.e., a system which would forbid the contradiction of those principles which are essential to even the lowest form of good government, may preserve itself. But even this is not very practical today, since such principles could

hardly be upheld without falling back upon philosophical doctrines which have long been discarded.

Since, under the present circumstances, no other regime is practical, (I mean proximately possible), I think we must work for the latter notwithstanding the fact that the speculative foundations are ignored, but bringing out, negatively, it is true, the contradictions we are lead to if we do not accept certain fundamentals as at least an inescapable condition of preservation. This may be hoping against hope, but what else can be done?

Now, to get to Aristotle. His democracy is based on equality and freedom. These principles are essentially unstable. First, equality is contrary to what is simply just, because individuals and functions are not equal in those things which pertain to government or to being governed. While equality is never recognized in practice, the fact it is recognized in theory bungles the practice.

As I told you in my letter this is good work. It is precisely what I wanted you to do, and I'm happy to see that you are willing to make the necessary effort.

Page 1  
Note 1

The line I parenthesize I would leave out because of what you have said in the preceding sentence. We could hardly subscribe to that statement without a careful commentary.

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Page 1  
Note 2

I think you should make much of the fact that Feuerbach, in this connection, uses, in the appendices to the last edition of his work, both St. Thomas and Aristotle as authorities. If I remember correctly, he even quotes the saying "anima est quodammodo omnia". I saw it in the Stuttgart edition of 1903. In this manner you would ward off the prejudiced reader who believes that you are merely trying to apply haphazardly a Thomistic criticism of a man so far removed, at least in appearance, from preoccupation with what we might think on such subjects. In fact, you might even present your work as an attempt to show how thoroughly Feuerbach misinterpreted St. Thomas. Few if any have pointed out that Feuerbach was most careful to show that his philosophy was a natural outcome of the great doctrines of the past. You could call attention to his many references to St. Thomas.

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Page 1  
Note 3

In presenting Feuerbach's view of "consciousness of species" I think you should make very clear just what he says

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and what he does not say. This would gradually lead up toward your criticism. For instance, before mentioning Feuerbach's own position, you might point out that man's self-awareness reveals to him certain activities which set him apart from all other things surrounding him. The manner in which he knows, desires and transforms things, gradually leads him toward a knowledge of his own nature. An essential feature is his capacity to grasp the universal. Man knows himself as belonging to a certain species. Socrates knows that he is a man, but he also knows that man is not Socrates. At this point I would introduce Feuerbach's view.

In doing so, perhaps you should point out the ambiguity of the term "species". If I remember, Feuerbach uses the word "Gattung". You might show that this German term now means "species", then "genus", or, frankly, the "universal". When Feuerbach uses this term, whether he means species or genus he never prescind from its aspect of universality. It is precisely this which will allow him to reason as he does.

You should, I believe, arrange things in such a manner that when on page 2 you begin to discuss the two kinds of universality, you will no longer be bothered with the term species. Furthermore, since later on you yourself will use the term species à propos of sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge, you must be careful to forestall confusion in the mind of the reader.

I think you should also point out the ambiguity of the term "consciousness" as employed by Feuerbach. We have the right to do this, since he quotes St. Thomas, and translates the term "cognitio" for instance, to suit his purpose.

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Page 2  
Note 1

The last part of the second sentence of this paragraph, "not in the sense that it is opposed to matter", is introduced rather brusquely, and one does not see why, it is made. Presumably, you mean that while it is opposed to singular matter, it still expresses common matter: it excludes the flesh and bones of Socrates, but not flesh and bones.

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Page 2  
Note 2

You might introduce the following thus: in so far as a universal is predicable of many, such as man or animal, it has no being outside of reason. Here I would quote from Book I Contra Gentes, Chapter 26: "Adhuc, quod est commune multis non est etc." down to "et ipse Plato". You might also refer to De Ente et Essentia, Chapt. 4.

Then you may go on by "This kind of universal is called etc."

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Page 2  
Note 3

By this time, you should have eliminated the term Species, and provisionally at least, confine yourself to a discussion of the universal. I would go on to say: But there is another kind of universality, quite different

from the first. It is universal not because it has its being in many but because its power extends to many kinds of effects. Thus the art of the architect is more universal than that of the carpenter. This means that the art of the former extends not only to the work of the carpenter, but also to that of the mason, the plumber, the electrician etc. From this example we may see the profound difference between the two kinds of universality. It is true that "art", considered in all its universality, may be called a universal cause. In reply to the question: What is the cause of shoes, we may reply "art". But we might give the same answer to the question: What is the cause of corkscrews? Explain here Physics II, lesson 6, numbers 2 and 3. Leave out, however, the example of the sun. Take a look at my Introduction à l'étude de l'âme.

You must point out also that a cause is called universal in causando, not merely because it extends to many effects, but because it extends to specifically different effects. On this point, see Metaphysics, Book 6, lesson 3, numbers 1207 to 1209.

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Page 3  
Note 1

Before going into this matter, I would say a few words about Plato. He too confused the logical and the real, but not in the same manner. As St. Thomas says in his commentary on Book I of the Metaphysics, lesson 10, n. 158: "Patet autem diligenter etc....non tamen eodem modo."

It is true that Plato too confused the universal in praedicando with the universal in causando. However, to this universal he gave a separate existence. Feuerbach, however, identifies the properties of Plato's separate idea with the singular material individual, and then goes on to say that man is distinguished from all other things in that he is aware of this universality.

From here on your treatment is first rate, and I have few suggestions to make.

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Page 8                    You should point out that Feuerbach himself quotes  
Note 1                    St. Thomas in this connection.

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Page 13                  Instead of the word "terminated", I would use the  
Note 1                  term "restricted".

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Page 15                  I would add the word "naturally". The preceding part  
Note 1                  of the sentence might convey to the reader that the intellectual soul is conjoined to the body in a platonic sense. You might of course give the sentence another twist. The addition of that word makes it rather awkward.

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Go right ahead. If you can keep this up, you will produce an excellent thesis.

Perhaps it would be opportune to insert a passage on Marx. In my book on the common good I quoted a passage

from him, taken from Morceaux choisis, page 217. I copied it on pages 183-184, note 67: "L'émancipation humaine ne sera réalisée etc."

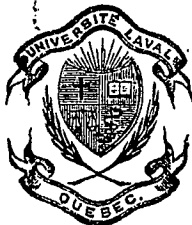
In the poverty of Philosophy, Marx also has a significant passage on abstraction. In A Handbook of Marxism, it is reproduced on page 351. The rest of the passage we have reproduced in French on pages 1 and 2 in our Marxist texts.

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By the way, have you read de Monléon's "Petites notes autour de la famille et de la cité" in Laval théologique et philosophique, vol. III, n. 2, 1947, pp. 262-289?



UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL  
FACULTÉ DE PHILOSOPHIE

A. K.

22 December 1952

# The Dean

Sir,

As far as I am able to judge it, this is scarcely more than weak verbiage; confused, ill-arranged, meagre and trivial in its results, flameless and exhaling deadly boredom — though the author seems to think a lot of himself. (That his French is not always good — he uses, e.g., the anglicisms excitement and audience [for auditoire] may be immaterial, as these lapses could be corrected.)

Against this must be held my own very defective knowledge of Plato, whom I never liked much — I always saw vastly more in Aristotle and in the Stoic psychology — and my congenital incapacity for philological interpretations and the like. The author certainly raises a problem: the tension between Plato's being an aesthete by temperament and his doctrinal rejection of aestheticism; but I can neither believe that this problem has not been seen by others for long, nor find that his treatment of it is in any way fruitful or interesting. I think that P's sallies against poetry etc. are themselves symptoms of an ill balanced, though in a sense hastened, aestheticism (cf. the Nietzschean intellectuals' contempt for the intellect, etc.).

In prostration, ~~Amédée~~ Amédée

LA FACULTÉ ULTRA-THOMISTE  
AU SERVICE  
DU PIRE MODERNISME  
ET PHILLO-BOLCHEVISME PSEUDO-CATHOLIQUE ?

ou

JE PROTESTE

non-confidentiel

Mémoire soumis par Aurèle Kolnai

MGR PARENT, VICE-RECTEUR

M. le DOYEN DE KONINCK

M. TRÉPANIÉ, DIR. D. ET.

MM. les Professeurs

R.P. GAUDRON, BABIN, SIMARD

1. Notre Faculté est dominée par une idéologie de thomisme super-formel, rigide et exclusif des courants de pensée philosophique (soit scolastiques, soit incarnés dans les écoles objectivistes modernes) rapprochés de la vue du monde thomiste mais représentant une vue du monde non-identique à elle dans un langage conceptuel plus ou moins différent. J'étais toujours éloigné de ladite idéologie, que j'appelle brièvement "ultra-thomiste"; mais jusqu'ici, je croyais lui pouvoir attribuer au moins le mérite nullement négligeable de constituer une forte défense—si non efficace, de toute façon conçue et prônée dans l'intention de la rendre telle—contre le flot immonde des modernismes naviguant sous un mensonge signé "catholique" et destinés à assurer la capitulation sans résistance des catholiques devant la religion américaniste du Progrès et de la Démocratie, l'athéisme "existentialiste" et surtout le marxisme. Je me disais que le noyau central de l'ultra-thomisme, avec tous les dangers intellectuels (et, à mon avis, moraux) qu'il comportait, était tout de même la volonté farouche de conserver dans les esprits le trésor entier de la vérité catholique, y compris un corps fondamental de vérités naturelles et d'attitudes mentales qui en sont difficilement séparables. En d'autres termes, j'étais porté à supposer qu'il s'agissait surtout d'une exaltation au service du Bien. Dans notre époque de déchéance spirituelle, une carapace serrée pourrait être tenue pour nécessaire afin de combattre la tentation de composer avec les forces du Mal qui occupent la scène mondiale et qui, sous leurs masques multiformes, sont si habiles à séduire les masses de catholiques dont l'esprit n'est pas très consolidé et qui sont travaillés par l'ambition de primaire (ou provenante d'autres motifs) de paraître aussi "libres", "ouverts" ou "avancés" que les modernes authentiques. Je croyais que le zélotisme des ~~ultra-thomistes~~ ultra-thomistes découlait principalement de leur conviction que l'état de siège dans lequel nous vivons nécessitait une discipline philosophique rigide et "sans faille". Ma supposition, peut-être erronée, ne pouvait pas être simplement le fruit d'un naïf optimisme, puisqu'elle s'appuyait en premier lieu sur le fait des diverses campagnes, puissantes et de haut mérite, que menait pendant plusieurs années M. De Koninck contre le marxisme, le marxisme et d'autres manifestations caractéristiques de l'athéisme ou pseudo-christianisme moderne.

2. Il paraît maintenant que je m'étais trompé. Voici les faits récents qui déchirent l'illusion dont je me bermais.

3. Le directeur de la revue para-bolchevique Esprit (voir 6.), un nommé Béguin, vient faire des conférences au Canada français. Ce n'est pas notre faute; nous vivons en démocratie libérale et nous n'y pouvons rien. Écoute M. Béguin qui veut, en en formant l'impression que déterminent son degré d'intelligence et sa structure émotive. Si des étudiants de notre Faculté y vont et que cela leur plaît, ce n'est guère un bon signe quant à leur formation, mais cela ne réfute en rien la droiture d'intention de ceux qui gouvernent la Faculté et qui y exercent l'enseignement. Cependant, nous n'en sommes pas là: la Faculté fait quelque chose.

#### 4. Que fait-elle?

ELLE ABOLIT LES COURS DE ~~PHILOSOPHIE~~ L'APRÈS-MIDI OÙ AURA LIEU LA CONFÉRENCE DE L'ILLUSTRE PROPAGANDISTE; ELLE ~~NON~~ ENJOINT OU DU MOINS RECOMMANDE AVEC EMPRESSEMENT AUX ÉTUDIANTS D'ALLER L'ÉCOUTER.

La conférence est suivie de "questions", de "discussion" si l'on veut; mais

LA FACULTÉ N'Y DÉLÈGUE PERSONNE POUR ÉVISCÉRER LES SOPHISMES DU NOMME BÉGUIN À LA LUMIÈRE THÉOLOGIQUE ET PHILOSOPHIQUES DU THOMISME (ou encore, du simple bon sens, de la logique ou du sens de l'honneur etc.).

Ce n'est pas tout.

À LA TABLE D'AFFICHES DE LA FACULTÉ DE PH., ON VOIT ENSUITE EN PLEINE SPLENDEUR ET SANS COMMENTAIRES LES MATIÈRES DE PROPAGANDE IMPRIMÉES DE L'Esprit: NON PAS UNE INVITATION À TELLE CONFÉRENCE OU AUTRE, MAIS UNE RECLAME GÉNÉRALE POUR L'Esprit ET SES IDÉES COMME TELS; DONC RECOMMANDATION NORMALE, ÉVIDENTE, DANS L'ORDRE DES CHOSSES,

comme s'il s'agissait, par exemple, d'une retraite pour universitaires, d'une publication thomiste ou bien scientifique, d'une réunion sportive ou de l'élection d'une "Reine des Étudiants".

5. La conférence de Béguin a un public nombreux et assez enthousiaste, y compris la plupart de nos étudiants en Licence. Comme cela s'entend, les messieurs de la Faculté des Sciences Sociales y sont au premier plan. Falardeau — qui donc, sinon lui? — préside, faisant à Béguin à peu près l'accueil que ferait M. De Koninck à St. Thomas ressuscité. (Ce Falardeau je le prévois commissaire politique de l'Eglise du Peuple pendant le régime de transition après l'arrivée du Parti au pouvoir, qui ne saurait tarder longtemps.) Des professeurs de la Faculté de Ph., deux sont présents: M. Trépanier, qui a l'habitude vertueuse de ne pas manquer les "manifestations universitaires", et M. Kolnai, vieillard vermoulu pour qui le voisinage immédiat du lieu constitue un motif pour s'y rendre et qui a toujours trouvé Mounier aussi intéressant que Maritain baigné d'un blême ennui. Le conférencier expose la pourriture d'esprit mouniériste très clairement et intelligiblement, avec verve et conviction. Les questions posées par Lussier, O'Neil et plusieurs autres portent sur des détails de peu d'importance sans jamais mettre en question une des présuppositions essentielles du mouniérisme. Ni M. Trépanier ni son subordonné qui écrit ses lignes ne disent un mot. Or, si M. Trépanier est sans doute un représentant incomparablement plus autorisé de la Faculté de Ph. que Kolnai, il n'a évidemment pas été chargé de faire la critique du mouniérisme, lequel, en particulier, ne ~~rentre~~ rentre aucunement dans le cadre des matières sur lesquelles il est spécialisé. Par contre, Kolnai est censé enseigner la Politique et il s'est spécialisé à combattre les virus de l'ordre de l'espritisme: il évitera donc difficilement le reproche d'une omission coupable. (Pour ce qui concerne mes motifs d'abstention, je les fournirai au cas où je serai soumis à un interrogatoire.)

6. Concernant le béguinage espritiste:

À la différence de M. de Monléon—un des Grands Manitous de l'ultra-thomisme, selon M qui Mounier serait nul et zéro—j'appréciais toujours beaucoup le talent, la sincérité et la flamme de Mounier, que j'oserais appeler un génie malsain, égaré et organiquement privé d'épine dorsale. Il était extrêmement différent de Maritain—que M. de Monléon lui préfère—Maritain, terne piocheur appliqué, mais surtout charlatan et auto-encenseur professionnel de grande habileté. Le fameux "engagement" mouniérien, sa révérence pour les élans de forte vitalité, son désir de dépasser les "desseins de Dieu" dans ce qui est "présence" imposante—ce n'est pas l'attitude des chevaliers d'industrie "intellectuels" comme Maritain ou Mortimer Adler, c'est une nostalgie essentiellement féminine imprégnée de romantisme et de sensiblerie. Vers 1939-1941, cela comportait aussi un flirt marqué avec le nazisme, alors une "réalité vigoureuse de l'époque"; vers le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1941, Maritain, enraîssé et malgré tout doué d'un peu plus de sens commun et par conséquent même d'entraîlles, n'en parla avec un juste dégoût. Plus tard, et jusqu'en nos jours, Mounier et ses séides se tournent avec pâmoison vers le marxisme, mais aussi vers l'existentialisme sartriot. Pour cette raison déjà, le béguinage espritiste n'est évidemment pas un bureau du Parti Communiste. ~~Parvenir à~~ Être communiste, cela demande des criminels, mais cela demande des hommes et non des esthètes du dévergondage "spirituel".

Et Béguin de se lamenter (je sens monter mes larmes en y pensant) que le beau rêve d'un paradis terrestre bâti ensemble avec les communistes, le rêve de 1945, au lendemain de la "Libération", se soit écroulé pour le moment...durs communistes! méchants communistes! ils ont "rompu le dialogue"! Ô, s'ils étaient prêts à le renouer! Ô, s'ils nous aimaient comme nous les aimons! Ô, s'ils étaient un peu moins vilainement sérieux, un peu plus hâbleurs pareils à nous, un peu moins unilatéralement virils eux qui sont si divinement virils! (Éternelle déception d'amante.) Lorsque, à la prochaine purge après la prise du pouvoir, le bourreau rouge enverra Béguin là où est sa place, le dernier soupir de ce grand chrétien sera toujours un soupir d'amoureuse (tandis qu'au moment amareu une bonne affaire, plein d'espoir qu'un compromis avantageux pourra être atteint). Si Béguin "n'accepte pas tout, sans réserve, dans le marxisme" (mais ces fâchus marxistes aiment précisément que l'on accepte tout sans réserve!), il n'accepte pas non plus tout sans réserve dans la Psychotechnique du Conditionnement que préconisent les Américains; du moins est-il très sûr que l'évangile soviétique et l'évangile chicagohollywoodien, aujourd'hui séparés (larmes, taisez-vous! je maîtrise ma douleur!), vont se fondre en un dans l'avenir et révéler leur identité profonde. L'espritiste aime embrasser les élans virils, mais il désire aussi que les élans virils s'entre-embrassent: il aime la paix et la synthèse! Une petite place aussi pour le surnaturel, s'il vous plaît!

Avec une voix graissée de révérence solennelle, Béguin souligne le FAIT—Sa Majesté le FAIT—que le communisme est la foi et l'espoir de l'immense majorité de la classe ouvrière en France. Sans avoir raison en tout, peuvent-ils donc ne pas avoir raison essentiellement? Impossible! Cependant, on pourrait dire que le capitalisme—la "société de l'argent"—a été aussi un fait jadis et même est encore un fait en quelque sorte; mais Béguin, pas un positiviste de pure eau, ne le constate pas avec // révérence solennelle. C'est un fait qui lui déplaît—apparemment parce qu'il ne respire pas l'élan généreux vers la divinité de l'homme. Avec rouges et pinks de toute description, Béguin a pour motif primordial dans son orientation sociale la haine de la "société d'argent". Ce qu'il redoute d'abord et surtout, ce n'est // pas le barbarisme total (qui, lui, a l'élan ~~pour le~~) mais la civilisation imparfaite—qui comporte des "injustices" (=inégalité de classes, relic d'un ordre hiérarchique)

I (autrement dire la capitulation). Pour elle, comme la religion, l'avenir-Dieu est univoque: un vrai et unique  
un être apparu d'un conflit entre les nobles champions de la foi et la science.

et qui est basé sur l'intérêt "sordide" plutôt que sur le chatouillement des essors vers l'infinitude humaine.

~~MAIS~~ Mais qu'il est exigeant, ce bonhomme! il n'accepte même pas entièrement et sans nulle réserve, comme solution pleinement satisfaisante, la "société du travail". Toute la "PERSONNE" n'est pas dans le travail, paraît-il. Tout de même, je trouve que le bain communiste est déjà un progrès si immense sur l'affreuse "société de l'argent" (où l'on peut rêver de "dialogues" et formuler des "réserves") que moi, à la place de Béguin, j'en serais satisfait, pour quelques siècles au moins! Put first things first, chéri Béguin: une fois libérés de l'insupportable oppression prosaïque du "capital", notre bonheur ne sera guère dérangé par les petite taches de beauté "matérialistes" que vous reprochez à la souveraineté prolétarienne.

7. Comment s'expliquer que la Faculté ultra-thomiste mande ses étudiants à boire les paroles de l'Ennemi par excellence, qu'elle les leur communique à la maison même—sans les avertir du caractère de cet Ennemi, sans y opposer le moindre contre-poids, sans rappeler à ce propos soit une doctrine thomiste soit une des énonciations pontificales: comme s'il s'agissait d'un des nôtres, ou bien d'assister à un concert de Haydn ou à une représentation de Shakespeare ou de Molière? Le thomisme sentirait-il le besoin d'être "complété", non seulement par les derniers cris en science expérimentale, mais par des attitudes "catholiques" du pôle opposé, des ébats amoureux avec Lénine et Sartre? Ultra-thomisme et modernisme effréné, seraient-ils seulement des alibis mutuels? Ou bien est-ce, ~~comme de coutume~~, une simple mégarde? Je ne saurais le dire. Je dirai avec Newton—n'en déplaise M. Emile Simard: Hypotheses non fingo. Voilà les faits: je proteste, et je demande un éclaircissement.

Caveant consules!

Québec, le 3 mai 1953.

P (C'est tout ailleurs que j'isais chercher les "compléments".)

*Amièle Kohn*

To the Readers of my SYNTHESIS OF CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST ("Anti-Maritain") in INTEGRITY, August, 1951,

G r e e t i n g s .

The following contribution, published in THE COMMON WHEAL, New York, September 14th, 1951, may hilariously widen their perspective in regard to this matter. -- Abbreviations: I=Integrity, K=Kolnai, M=Maritain. (in Oct. '34) Historical remark. His late Majesty KING ALEXANDER I of Yugoslavia, father to His present Majesty KING (in exile) PETER II, was assassinated at Marseilles, France, by Croat nationalists, probably abetted by the pro-Nazi Hungarian Government, because of his persistent and apparently successful endeavours to bring about a lasting alliance of Yugoslavia and France with Italy, so as to isolate Nazi Germany and frustrate her expansive designs.

Quebec, October 1st, 1951. AUREL KOLNAI .

.....

C o m m u n i c a t i o n s  
Attack on Maritain

(p.554)

New York, N.Y.

TO THE Editors: In a predicament, not personal but affecting the integrity of Catholic intellectual life in this country, I turn to you.

The August issue of I carried a review by Aurel K of Jacques M's Man and the State, a review so outrageous that I felt obliged to speak against it. The editors of I, however, declined to publish ~~my~~ my protest, at the same time assuring me that they agreed with the reviewer. But Mr K's review was so impertinent, not to say arrogant, that it must not remain unchallenged.

Not that M needs my defense, nor that I expected Mr K to accept M's political philosophy. Back in the thirties, when Hitler was at the gates of Vienna, Mr K's idol was the assassinated Dictator--King Alexander of Yugoslavia. My quarrel is not with Mr Kolnai's disagreement with Maritain's book, but with the way in which he voices it.

He writes not as one philosopher differing with another, let alone as a Christian differing with a Christian, but as a self-appointed inquisitor--or should I rather say, as an over-bright schoolboy who has yet to learn his manners. Even a few of his phrases about M: "He can only speak (of the French Revolution) in the tones of a French republican banquet orator," "He strikes the reader as if he were anxious to appear eligible for Catholic as well as for democratic-progressive-pinkish drawing-rooms," his book is "loath to renounce any fine and fashionable mood," his ideological constructions "dress up poor Thomas Aquinas in the rags of a laicist apostle of democracy," and the volume has "hardly ever a passage that would suggest the thinker in quest of truth"--even these few phrases, quite apart from their preposterousness, are enough to show him devoid of elementary decency.

Mr K is also very skillful in slander by insinuation, a technique unworthy of a philosopher, worthy of a yellow journalist or an abusive politician. Declaring that "M professes a progressive philosophy of history in the vein of the Enlightenment, Hegel and Marx," he implies that with the Enlightenment and Marx, M holds that man is sufficient unto himself and that his mind is mighty enough to solve all his problems. And this though M preached the contrary long before Mr K was heard of.

Again, he couples M with Lamennais and with Sagnier's Sillon movement, which were condemned by the Church, thus suggesting that his views too are condemnable. Indeed, he declares of his political philosophy that "in the upshot...it is Anti-Christ begged to accord an asylum to Christ." One of the few concrete objections in Mr K's six-page morass of generalities is to M's approval (qualified though it be) of World Government. How it must grieve

Mr Kolnai that Pius xii has congratulated the World Federalists on the courage with which they spend themselves for their cause, on their readiness to leave the beaten path.

They are few who know Maritain and are not struck by his graciousness, by his wisdom which is all charity, by his love of men with its source in his love of Christ. And even those who have never met him know that his work—and he has labored, literally, while others slept—has done much to lead Catholic philosophy out of its ghetto, that his thought and his personality have brought countless people into the Church. When Mr K called this harvest "worldly success," what could have guided his pen if not resentiment?

In his last paragraph, Mr K chides M for his "serious lack of self-criticism" in letting his book be published in "unusually bad English." Admittedly, it is not faultless, but it is simple and true. Yes, M's English is the English of a Frenchman, but the lack of self-criticism is all on the part of Mr K, who does not see that his own style is pompous and overladen. As a priest, may I dare suggest to Mr K, and, for that matter, to the editors of I, that they make a retreat one of these days, and ask their retreat master to stress the two basic Christian virtues: humility and charity.

(Rev.) John H. Oesterreicher.

Quebec, October, 12. 1950.

Dr. Kolnai and dear colleague please do not abuse of this  
relative equality :

Your whole difficulty about what I say of prudential truth stems from this that you do not understand what I mean by prudence. To realize this you have only to see Q. 49 of the IIA IIAe: "De singulis prudentiae partibus quasi integralibus." Aussi bien, you seem to overlook the simple fact that in everything I have written about prudence my aim was only one: to stress (the uninitiated might say overstress) the fact knowledge alone is not enough to guarantee the truth of action. And I would advise you to read article 13 of q. 47 as well.

Cheerfully wringing your neck (but salvaging your navel which must be remarkable indeed inasmuch as it has held your frame together for so long) I am bent on remaining.

Yours severely,

---

Charles De Koninck

Quebec, May 11th, 1953.

To His Beanstalk Thinness Doctor Aurel Kolnai,  
4817 Western Avenue,  
Westmount 6,  
P.Q.

Sir :

Though I forgot to mention it to you before your departure, it remains true nevertheless that I had decreed - a decree binding only to myself - to occupy your office this summer during your absence.

Though I am no longer in possession of it, a universal key was given to me when we took over half of this building for the Faculty of Philosophy. From this I inferred that I had the right to enter every room which could be opened by means of this key. Since Mademoiselle Parent lost this key, I must now have recourse to Monsieur Galibois. In these matters, however, he obeys me very much like an "instrumentum inanimatum".

My main reason for occupying your office now and then is none other than an urge to seek a new atmosphere. I wanted to warn you, for upon your return you may observe some changes in the order of your books on the shelves. I am, for instance, very much disturbed by the detective stories found *pêle-mêle* among works by Teynbae, Klinka, etc. The point being that such wanton disorder does not convey to me the kind of change I expect when moving from my own office to that of another.

I should add a few words of affection for your charming wife if only this were not an official letter. I will therefore have to restrain the expression of my sentiments until so more propitious occasion.

Yours truly,

---

Charles De Koninck.

Le 7 Août, 1946

Cher Monsieur le Doyen,

Le gâteau n'était pas  
fait pour vous seul, mais aussi  
pour votre famille. En me  
rendant 25 Ave. St. Geneviève,  
j'ai appris que Madame et  
les enfants sont partis en  
vacance. Tout le monde  
est parti aussi mon mari  
pour manger le gâteau.

Bonne nuit avec ? Dans  
cette situation désespérée

En vous souhaitant une  
très bonne convalescence,  
je vous envoie mes  
meilleurs salutations,

Elizabeth Kolna

je vous prie de bien vouloir  
d'accepter le malheureux gâteau  
 Viennois. Ci-joint est le recept  
que Annel m'a aidé à  
traduire et aussi quelques  
roman detective donc la plupart  
appartenait à Monsieur Kötner.  
Il y a encore plusieurs des nous.  
Je pourrai les envoyer par post  
si vous voulez les avoir.

C'est bien que mon mari  
ne voit pas cette lettre en  
mauvais français. Je vous  
prie de m'excuser toutes  
les fautes nombreuses qu'elle  
contient.

c/o Prof. Karponich West Wardsboro, Vermont 20th of August, 1948  
U. S. A.  
WEST WARDBORO  
VERMONT

Dear Mrs. De Kominetz,

Against my wish and will I  
am here and most happy. There is plenty  
of real hot sun, although the weather predictions  
say every day that it will rain. Do you know  
where Aniele is? for I don't. We had spent  
some days in Montreal together and enjoyed  
them very much in company with our  
hungarian friends and with an old Austrian  
friend. In about a week we will live in  
his charming flat for some days in Montreal.  
Aniele didn't want to come with me, partly  
out of delicacy, because he did not want to  
abuse the hospitality of our dear Russian  
friends, and because he wants to be a  
bachelor again: to flirt with fat ladies,  
to see the capital of his future "home-  
land" and to look after English goods in  
Toronto and to observe with his own  
eyes the different electric current of that  
city.

There are beautiful green hills around here, it is a splendid ~~view~~ <sup>view</sup> and no houses, nothing else visible. The house of Mr. Karpovich looks like that of a poor Russian Country-Gentleman, everything in and out side is made of wood. No electricity (Thank's heaven!) no running water and most charming wooden stoves for cooking. The floors around the house are those they used to plant in old Russia. Mrs. Karpovich bought all the interior on auctions, she is almost possessed by going to all auctions in the neighboring villages and comes home with nice old things and more often with such ones, which she never wanted to buy. She doesn't like house-keeping, but likes to wash dishes, because they <sup>plates, cups etc.</sup> are all different, as they come from several ~~many~~ auctions, and therefore, she says, it amuses her to clean them. Every body does here what he likes. Sometimes she does not like to cook and she doesn't like to take care of their Doghound Buckka, but she does take great care of me and just brought me up a glass of milk and biscuits for the night. Serge, their son, plays the

because our Doctor found his state of health very weak, very low blood pressure etc. and told him he needs absolute rest. But he is naughty and will not follow his advice.

This letter is written with a rather funny porte-plume (probably it was bought at an auction) and I succeeded with much skill to write with it.

We talked very favourably to our Austrian friend about Berta as he is looking for a French-Canadian wife (The English-Canadians want to play football and he doesn't like to go with them to play ice hockey, nor listen to these radio reports) but Berta would be too good for him. Please give my heartfelt loves to the children, and kindest regards to Mlle. Parent and Mademoiselle Berta.

With many good wishes and greetings,  
 your obedient servants'  
 wife  
 Elisa Lett Kohan

piano, sometimes together with his father. I found nice little Bay Preludes for Goddard. The Karpovs are good friends of Countess Tolstoy and of all the persons who helped the poor Russian teacher Mrs. Karsenova. The whole day I hear only talking ~~of~~ in Russian, of which I don't understand a word. Prof. Karpov was much impressed by the lecture of Monsieur le Doyen and still remembers it with amazement, as it was so different from the lectures delivered at Harvard.

Now, how are you, dear Mrs. Le Karpov and Monsieur le Doyen? and how are the children and my most charming god-child Jean-Marie? I hope you have spent a good time in the wilderness, and I hope you have some sunshine in Quebec too.

I hope to find Aurèle in Montreal, where we will stay as long as possible. Maybe together with our friends I will succeed to bring him on a <sup>trip</sup> ~~trip~~ Hungarian, farne for some days, ~~for~~ (where there are Hungarian books)

Kiviklaag, 2 July 1953  
(Kiviklaag)

4517 Western Ave., Westmount 6

Wel Edle Geachte Heer, Uwre Spectabiliteit,

Goed is van Kwebek hierheen te verhuizen. Het is buiten alle twijfel. En zit niets anders op. Dat kan niemand u in de hand dan tien in de lucht. De beste shugler daar aan was. Onderwijding, zegt Aristoteles, is de beste leermaster. Hoogmoed komt voor dan veel: dat blijft afgesproken. De vraag een prijs-courant aan. Zelf u mij monstere verzenden? Zijn Uwre waren goedkoop? De nablaars kunnen heeft de goeder intellectuellen meer. Wat zeide u? Zeg het nog eens. Laat hem aan zijn lot over. Wat een dork voor niemant! En was geen frachter bij de goederen. Bijna al de kisten waren gebroken. Uwre bevelen zullen stipt nagekomen worden. Deze sprake is Duitsch gaar kreier.

A poorer man feels mostly tempted when in proximity of the

possessions of a wealthy one: therefore I am afraid I must warn you, in view of your visit to my office, that I have a carefully detailed list of the bank-notes and shares I keep there, and should instantly be able to detect any decrease. For the rest, you are most welcome - for what it may be worth to you, seeing that in this sour neo-clerical building no room can possibly come by a so-called "atmosphere." Perhaps Babin's is best (especially, in his absence), as his centre of gravity is "located" there.

The Ascension Church, not far from our house, is most excellent modern Gothic, and has a beautiful altar from Italy. Damn the Irish in general, yet it is their presence in the Province of Quebec that is saving me from apostasy. Their priests' sermons are a treat to the unfortunate who has heard French-Canadian ones.

The residential section of the rich, in Upper Westmount (roughly speaking, the acute angle between Sherbrooke & Côte de Neiges), is marvellous and comforting: even in recent years, there have been some people who have an idea how to live and to build. The fancy new sections in Quebec would be the proletarian slums here. But we feel quite happy in this modest middle-class residential part, two minutes from Western Station, so that most of our journeys to & from the Centre are by train. I am plunged in the past - old comfort.

Hoogmoed is van Kwebek hierheen te verhuizen. Het is buiten alle twijfel. En zit niets anders op. Dat kan niemand u in de hand dan tien in de lucht. De beste shugler daar aan was. Onderwijding, zegt Aristoteles, is de beste leermaster. Hoogmoed komt voor dan veel: dat blijft afgesproken. De vraag een prijs-courant aan. Zelf u mij monstere verzenden? Zijn Uwre waren goedkoop? De nablaars kunnen heeft de goeder intellectuellen meer. Wat zeide u? Zeg het nog eens. Laat hem aan zijn lot over. Wat een dork voor niemant! En was geen frachter bij de goederen. Bijna al de kisten waren gebroken. Uwre bevelen zullen stipt nagekomen worden. Deze sprake is Duitsch gaar kreier.

A. Kolnai, c/o Dr. Richard Redler

3425 Peel Street, Montreal

3rd September, 1948

My Most Learned and Powerful Chief,

First, allow me to thank you as Dean of the Faculty, officially and personally — and whole-heartedly — for my promotion to the rank of "professeur agrégé":... lovely Ernest Germain, an eternal school-boy, woke us with the gladdening news, waving in his hand a cutting from L'Action Catholique, and inquiring of Elisabeth (who had opened the door in answer to his ring) whether he might see "monsieur le professeur agrégé who lives here", — the said dignitary being still fast asleep at the moment —, and so on. I subjoin, though, a small unofficial complaint: our portraits were lacking... Anyhow, Messrs de Monléon, Trépanier and myself have now reached up to M. Babin's lonely height, and are looking down upon Father Dionne's lowly status, so far as our Faculty is concerned. I shall die, then, as a Professeur Agrégé (besides dying, if two more years and a half be granted me by Heaven, as a subject of His Gracious Majesty), instead of as a simple Chargé de Cours. It does make a difference. Of course, it is not equivalent to the title of my wildest daydreams: that of a Police-General. But, little as I deserve my actual title, I should deserve that more glamorous one even less.

But let us take the rough along with the smooth of it, as the saying goes. To the sweet wine of my sentimental gratitude I must add the gall and wormwood of my practical ingratitude. In other words, start this nobler phase of my career with defaulting on my duty. More concretely still, grave reasons compel me to beg ~~for~~ your permission for me to delay the resumption of my duties by one week at any rate, if more is impossible. Incidentally, I have barely a faint idea as yet of what I shall be supposed to do, as I have not hitherto been judged worthy of being sent the Schedule of Lectures (the same is true of the LAVAL issue containing J. de Monléon's already famous article). *I am shamefully unprepared.*

The situation is that we are living very happily ~~in~~ here in mellow Königsberg, in a convenient private flat with the tenant being mostly absent, and — "ce qui ne coûte rien" — gratis. The point, however, is not the pleasure for me but the imperious necessity for my wife of staying here about another week, instead of rushing home at once. Thereby hangs a not very cheerful story. When coming up from Quebec, E. was very elated, suspecting that she was

*(feeling)*

pregnant (and assuming me to be the efficient cause thereof). I provisionally accepted the situation and we agreed that if a girl ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> born her name would be URSULA, and if a boy, Albert Charles George NICHOLAS. In the latter case, we should have made bold to ask you for the privilege of acting as godfather. But E.'s doctor peremptorily declared that no pregnancy was present — without leaving the slightest doubt open —: a decision I again accepted with equanimity, whereas E. felt very sad about it. Of course, there being no pregnancy, she was not cautioned (in view of her bodily frailty) to behave very quietly, etc. Thereupon she went to our Russian friends' estate in Vermont, discharged part of Mrs K.'s housekeeping duties, etc. Her ten-days permit of stay was about to expire when she was suddenly seized with pains and underwent a miscarriage. She only spent a day in a hospital at Brattleboro (which she praises) and, a somewhat risky step, travelled back immediately to Montreal. There seems to be nothing special the matter with her now, but of course she is in a rather poor general condition and dreads packing and travelling as far as the next few days are concerned.

So that's the end of the story:— no doubt the doctor had the greater objective probability on his side, but confound it: why be so sure about the matter? Yet on the whole we had had a good impression of him.

I remain, Sir,  
with repeated thanks,  
and in respectful friendship,  
your most humble,  
and most obedient servant,

Ansel Kohner

Dear Chief and Master,

Certainly it was not Ansel who had been guilty of my pregnancy, but a good Quebecese ~~head~~<sup>(cousin)</sup> man. Nevertheless it is a sad story. You may understand that I don't want to live alone to the end of my days, with a bull-collector.

I hope you and Madame and the children are well. Please take well care of my godchild!

With many kind regards  
Elisabeth

10th September, 1948

I put,  
Sir,

my feet on  
The stiff neck of Eaton;  
The face of a Gorgen  
I turned on proud Morgan;  
I sought, spied, and searched;  
I stooped, wormed, and perched;  
I delved, dipped, and dug;  
I would flatter and hug—

To unearth and to raise  
From the trash-heap's deep maze  
For you  
the unique,  
the bomb-shell ash-trays:

Yet none of my desperate efforts a-  
vailed.

My Lord Dean, I failed.

A.K.

# U L T I M A   V E R B A

INTROIT  
That "The People" shall perish  
Is the vision I cherish.

DIRGE  
All the King's horses and all the King's men  
Can't put this Empire together again.

CONSOLATION  
One joy, at least, for me, intense and fiery:  
I shan't be a co-citizen of "Eire"!

CREED  
In Death's and Hell's gorge  
Three cheers for King George!  
Though the mob-world's foul tide mount ever so high:  
A Tory I live, and a Tory I'll die.

CONCLUSION  
Man is cursed, and I am lonely,  
But  
British First, and British Only!

R a p p o r t

soumis à

Monseigneur A.-M. Parent, Secrétaire-Général.  
M. le Doyen C. De Koninck.

Mon marchand de livres, M. Peter Thomas Fischer (507, 5th Avenue, New York, N.Y.), a immédiatement placé une commande télégraphique en Suisse, concernant la dernière édition de UEBERWEG: GESCHICHTE DER PHILOSOPHIE en 5 volumes. Selon son estimation, le prix sera quelque part entre 30 et 60 dollars. Ayant ~~les volumes~~ en possession, il vous en fera un offre formel avant de les expédier.

± l'ouvrage

Il va vous expédier sans offre préalable, en outre, trois livres que j'ai commandés chez lui, et dont le prix global se chiffre à quelques 14 dollars ou ~~moins~~ un peu moins. Ce sont 1) un numéro récent de la NEUE RUNDSCHAU, contenant une étude, paraissant importante, sur l'existentialisme, 2) un livre récent par ALFRED WEBER sur la situation spirituelle du temps présent, 3) un livre dont j'ai oublié l'auteur mais qui m'avait paru important, sur l'évolution du subjectivisme moderne en Philosophie.

En outre, j'ai commandé une anthologie américaine d'articles sur la Philosophie du 20<sup>me</sup> siècle, qui me paraissait très riche et utile, à Cambridge (étant très pressé à Cambridge, je ne remarquais pas si c'était chez M. Tutin ou M. Schoenwald). Ce livre, dont le prix s'élève à 5 dollars, vous sera expédié.

Avec mon parfait respect.

Aurèle Kolnai

Quebec, 21 April 1948

Sir,

As I have suggested the other day, you might do worse than try and acquire a somewhat more thorough knowledge and understanding of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Thus, you have always declined even to discuss my inveterate suspicion that the doctrine of the said St. Thomas, based on that of Aristotle, was Naturalist; yet, as enclosure shows, such is the view, expressly stated in The Tablet, of so competent a Scholar as your eminent Colleague of Laval University. (p. 207; for minor matters, see also pp. 214 seq.).

I remain, Sir,

your most humble servant,

(Normenstein von und zu) Prata

(not "Brak", if you will excuse me)

1. un joli café-restaurant (du type bourgeois-paysan; bon vin?), Theaterplatz, vis-à-vis du THEATER-CAFÉ

(11) Kornhaus

(12) Burgerspital (très beau baroque)

(13) Casernes, manèges et places d'exercices militaires

(14) Cimetière Brengarten

(15) Insel-Spital

(16) WIENER CAFÉ, Schaulplatzgasse (sorte de cave, plafond très bas, caractère très café, serveuse blonde vieillissante et aigrie; consommations mauvaises)

(17) CAFÉ RUDOLF, Hirschgraben (magnifique beurre et marmelade de prunes; cachet rural)

(18) Junkerngasse (vieux palais déserts, ghost-haunted)

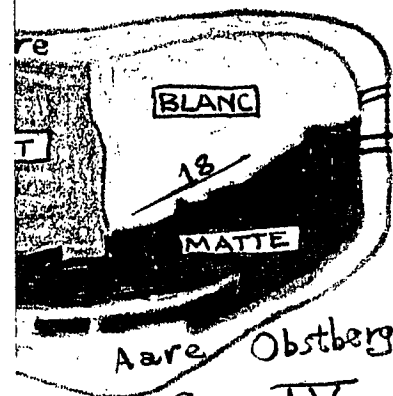
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Beundenfeld



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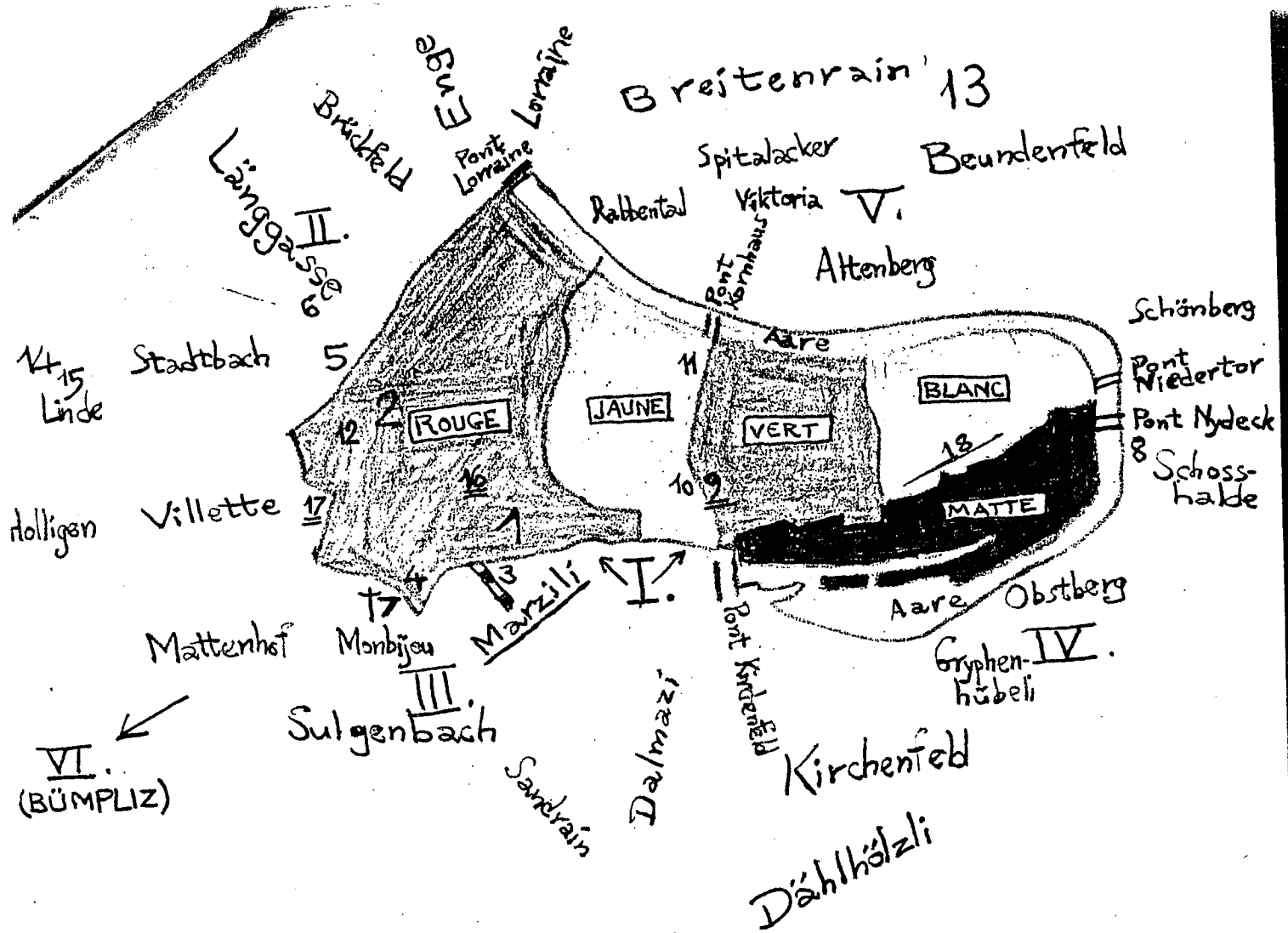
hthölzli

BUNDESPALAST: PALAIS FÉDÉRAL  
(surpompant Marzili)

now and remote paysage côtier,  
u Ier arrondissement)

3) Cave des Ours

à café; bonne qualité des con-  
un petit gâteau est servi auto-  
é noir)



- (1) DOMUS CONFOEDERATIONIS HELVETICAE: BUNDESPALAST: PALAIS FÉDÉRAL  
(surplombant Marzili)
- (2) Gare Fédérale
- (3) Descente à Marzili (doux et idyllique, mellow and remote paysage côtier,  
cependant tout près du Ier arrondissement)
- (4) Parc „Kleine Schanze“
- (5) Parc „Große Schanze“ (Am Bollwerk).
- (6) Université
- (7) Église cath.-rom.
- (8) Cave des Ours
- (9) THEATER-CAFÉ (beau et élégant, mais vrai café; bonne qualité des con-  
sommations; de 1 à 3 p.m., un petit gâteau est servi auto-  
matiquement avec le café noir)
- (10) Un joli café-restaurant (du type bourgeois-paysan, bon vin?), Theaterplatz,  
vis-à-vis du THEATER-CAFÉ
- (11) Kornhaus
- (12) Burgerspital (très beau baroque)
- (13) Casernes, manèges et places d'exercice militaires
- (14) Cimetière Bremgarten
- (15) Insel-Spital
- (16) WIENER CAFÉ, Schauplatzysasse (sorte de cave, plafond très bas, caractère très  
café, serveuse blonde vieillissante et aigrie; consommations mauvaises)
- (17) CAFÉ RUDOLF, Hirschgraben (magnifique beurre et marmelade de prunes; cachet rural)
- (18) Junkerngasse (vieux palais déserts, ghost-haunted)

Ω Kúple,

Having regard to my independent position, and at my wife's instances, I have erased the more drastic among my marginal comments.

x) "You are <sup>any</sup> ~~nothing~~ more than Goll and Satire; your facial expression has become much uglier lately." xx)

My thesis is that, though Höllenkampf or Hell's Concentration Camp certainly ~~also~~ must not be confused either with Aristotle, or St Thomas, or John of St Th., or you, or Jacques de Mouléon, or even with Father Cautin (who, in my impression, at any rate knows his mother tongue fairly well), the orgy of vile stupidity (smacking of Stalinist Talmudism) displayed by this Hell's Summer Camp reflects, in a distorted ~~but~~ but strikingly illuminating fashion — as caricatures often do —, the

xx) But she has something much better to offer the king, and I know it better than you did, we have been living in Goll's Paradise.

basic incongruity of the Scholastic  
~~philosophy~~ conception of philosophy. De Mont's

objection — "you always have in  
mind the small fry ["sours-off's"] and  
draw illegitimate conclusions as  
to Thomism as such" — simply  
doesn't hold water.

Why is there so much more truly  
philosophical substance in Moral  
Theology and Canon Law than in  
Scholastic "philosophy" proper?  
In particular, so much more free-  
dom of mind?! Because, there, what-  
ever Faith imposes is stated and im-  
posed explicitly and formally, and  
therefore Reason is not falsified  
into a simulacrum of rational thought.  
— — — But these are mere obiter dicta.  
The subject cannot be exhausted in  
brief and easy a manner.

(Lent) Scrutaper

MONSIEUR LE DOYEN

Although, as His Excellency mentions, (see Blurb)  
Professor Ryan's contentions (would this by-rhyme did not disturb!)  
May not settle all the problems of the Catholic college course —  
Your expert Tongue will meet  
With juicy chunks of Meat  
In this fully flavoured Gravy, in this silky, spicy Sauce.  
May your Eyes august and cerulean  
View meekly my cheeky John Julian  
Whose volume (not, I trust, tainted with Tedium)  
Is tendered you through my humble medium,  
And shall henceforward preen  
Your richly stocked bookshelf, O Dean.

Although, as His Excellency mentions, (see Blurb)  
Professor Ryan's contentions (would this by-rhyme did not disturb!)  
May not settle all the problems of the Catholic college course —

    Your expert Tongue will meet  
    With juicy chunks of Meat  
In this fully flavoured Gravy, in this silky, spicy Sauce.

May your Eyes august and cerulean  
View meekly my cheeky John Julian  
Whose volume (not, I trust, tainted with Tedium)  
Is tendered you through my humble medium,  
    And shall henceforward preen  
    Your richly stocked bookshelf, O Dean.

Am. 13 June 1949

My Lord Deau,

Suppose we made up the Éditions de l'U.L. book you have approved in principle, out of these three parts:

A. Laural etc. article, Privilege & Liberty.

B. Thomist article, The meaning of the Common Man.

C. A third article, The Philosophy of Anti-Communism, which for the greater part would yet have to be written, and whose plan I am here subjoining.

You observe that this would also embrace the "Primacy of Politics" theme, as well as that of the "attitude of the private person as such", and by implication, a critique of Pacifism as far as necessary.

2  
—The task of Philosophy as such consists, of course, mainly in overcoming the fallacious philosophies that pullulate in this sphere.

Anyhow, it might be that you will consider the whole plan of C. excessively political. In that case (though I believe an essay of this kind is useful) it would have to be dropped, and something else — perhaps, an expansion of some parts, which I should beg you to designate — ~~to~~ put in its place.

Awaiting your decisions,  
I am,

~~Devotedly~~ yours,

Koot

In spite of my repeated screams and yells of  
despair I do not think the opusculum to be wholly  
worthless.

Prof. Dr. Brummelstein

Monsieur le Doyen

Privatissimum über Kulturphilosophie  
für meinen begabten Schüler C. De K.

Kein Geschwätz [chatter, prate, mouthing,  
ranting], keine eigenen Gedanken. Ausschließlich  
Gelehrsamkeit [scholarship], Tatsachen, Autorität,  
Zitate, "information". Keine Abschweifung  
[digression]: nur über Kultur κατ' ἐξοχήν.

Doyen A. K. F.



Québec, avril 1950

UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

FACULTÉ DE PHILOSOPHIE

Rapport soumis à

Mgr A.-M. PARENT, C.S.S., Vice-Recteur, etc., etc., Québec  
M. C. DE KONINCK, F.C.R.S., Doyen, etc., etc., Québec  
M. l'Abbé M. DIONNE, professeur titulaire, etc., Québec  
M. A. TREMBLAY, Vice-Directeur, etc., Québec et Paris  
M. E. BABIN, professeur agrégé de 1<sup>re</sup> classe, Québec  
M. L.E. PALACIOS, professeur titulaire, Madrid et Québec  
M. R. MENZER, grand industriel, etc., Montréal  
M. G.A. LANYI, Associate Professor, etc., Providence

et à d'autres dignitaires.

-----  
G a z e t t e , Montreal. 6 April, 1950.

~~~~~

Toronto, April 5.—(P)—Public gathering places, such as Viennese coffee houses or English public houses were advocated for Ontario today by the Chief Inspector of Toronto's public schools. Z.S. Phimister told the Urban School Trustees' Association that the gathering places would provide for more discussion on the part of adults and thus help along a "faltering" system of adult education.

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Comment.

(1) By 'discussion on the part of adults', Mr. Phimister who is presumably himself an adult, may be supposed to mean 'discussion among adults'.

(2) When referring to the "faltering" system of adult education', Mr. Phimister doubtless knows what he is talking about, though he may not know it well enough.

(3) Let us have the English Pub, by all means; but the First Principle stands:

The Coffee-House replaces everything;  
Nothing replaces the Coffee-House.

*Aurèle Kolnai*

professeur agrégé de 2<sup>de</sup> classe.

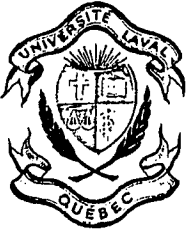
Who might be Mr. Phimister?

If viewed as French, I 'claim',

A connotation sinister

Attaches to his name.

Whoever he may be, pure wisdom drips  
Mellifluously from his lips.



UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL  
FACULTÉ DE PHILOSOPHIE

67 rue St-Louis, App't 203

Mon cher Charles et Chef,

Nous devrions avoir  
l'institution des  
Saturnalia, où  
l'Inférieur  
donne des ordres  
au Supérieur.

C'est la première fois, je crois, <sup>que</sup> je vous prie  
avec insistance de me faire une faveur. Voici : vous ~~êtes~~<sup>êtes</sup>  
votre propre maître, vous n'avez pas peur de Mgr Parent,  
votre situation n'est pas précaire, etc., etc. Donc, je  
vous supplie de différer votre retour par un jour (ou deux,  
si nécessaire) afin de consulter, au sujet de votre état  
de santé, le docteur Julius Holló. (Prononcer comme holkar,  
mais c'est d'un symbolisme inverse. Holló, en hongrois,  
signifie corbeau, et le personnage a l'air d'un vieux  
cacatoès très distingué.) Holló est de loin le meilleur  
médecin que j'aie jamais connu dans ma vie longue,  
orageuse et farcie de rapports médicaux. Il est le seul,  
parmi ceux que j'ai connus tant en Europe qu'en Amé-  
rique, qui ait une conception sapientiale de l'art mé-  
dical. (Vous m'insulteriez en supposant que j'entends par  
là une sorte de sectarisme à la Naturheilkunde  
etc., avec dédain <sup>en bloc</sup> pour les données de la science exacte.  
Vous m'insulteriez plus grièvement en m'attribuant d'autres  
motifs que celui de l'inquiétude que je ressens à l'en-  
droit de votre état physique — j'avoue, il est vrai, que  
ce motif-là, comme tel, ne manque pas d'un aspect égoïste  
ou plutôt self-regarding. En un mot, quel que soit le

2  
meilleur médecin à Québec, il pourrait y <sup>en</sup>avoir un à New York, ville très grande et très frontière européennes-américaine, qui lui soit encore supérieur. En tout cas, je le crois très supérieur au docteur Birman à Montréal.) Ce n'est pas parce que Hollo est une personnalité extraordinaire qu'il est le meilleur médecin que j'aie connue; mais les deux ne s'excluent pas, il y a plutôt une certaine convergence probable. C'est d'ailleurs un homme <sup>(ma femme dit que non)</sup> riche et le besoin de l'"aider" ne m'inspire pas du tout. Au demeurant, ses honoraires ne sont pas exorbitants.

Si vous le voyez — utinam fuisset —, veuillez me mentionner, il m'aime bien.

Madame Joë n'a pas connaissance de ma lettre, mais j'assume toute responsabilité a posteriori (ou plutôt ex post: même si vous refusez de suivre mon conseil.

Elle a d'ailleurs dit une chose délicieuse que probablement elle a déjà oubliée mais que je colporte rigoureusement. Le mari l'entendra aussi.

M. Mounier, né en 1905, vient de mourir.

Cordialement et submisse

Aurèle

Adresse du bureau:

Julius Hollo, M.D.

1100 Park Avenue

New York 28, N.Y.

Tel. ATWATER 9-7958

(On peut, si c'est urgent, très bien lui téléphoner aussi à son domicile, qui n'est pas éloigné du bureau; voir Annuaire.)

N'hésitez pas de le faire le dimanche!